



State of Indiana Indiana Horse Racing Commission

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Governor

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**For Immediate Release
March 12, 2009**

Indiana Reforms Whipping Regulations

The most stringent regulations in North America harness racing regarding the use of the whip are now in place in Indiana.

The Indiana Horse Racing Commission voted unanimously at its March 12, 2009 public meeting to adopt whipping reform measures. The first-of-its-kind regulation requires handholds to be taut with the elbows in front of the chest while limiting whipping to wrist action only – minimizing elbow and/or shoulder movement.

“The new regulation is another step forward for the Indiana Standardbred industry”, said Sarah McNaught, Commission Chairman. “If harness racing is to have a bright future, we must show that we are sensitive to the welfare of our equine athletes. The status quo is unacceptable.”

The new regulation was proposed by Presiding Judge, Tim Schmitz and enthusiastically supported by the Indiana Standardbred Association (ISA). Tim Schmitz has long been a strident advocate for whipping reform.

“Judge Schmitz and the ISA are to be applauded for their cooperative efforts on such an important and timely issue,” said McNaught.

Indiana has had a long history of strict enforcement of its whipping regulations. Over the past five years it has issued 300 rulings for whipping infractions.

The rule is effective immediately and will be enforced at the beginning of Hoosier Park’s race meet which starts March 24, 2009.

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